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SUBJECT: AU SUMMIT -- AF ACTING A/S CARTER MEETS WITH
SUDANESE GOVERNMENT OFFICIALS

Classified By: Ambassador Donald Yamamoto, reasons 1.4 (b) and (d)

11. (C) Summary: AF Acting Assistant Secretary Phillip Carter, joined by Acting USAID Assistant Administrator Earl Gast, and Sudan Programs Group Director Timothy Shortley, met February 1 with Sudanese Presidential Advisers Nafie Ali Nafie and Mustafa Ismael and Sudanese Foreign Minister Deng Alor on the margins of the AU Summit in Addis Ababa. Carter sought to obtain more decisive action from the Sudanese on Darfur and on implementation of the Comprehensive Peace Agreement (CPA) as well as to urge the Government to hold off on attacking the South Darfur town of Muhajariya, which was occupied by Justice and Equality Movement rebel forces two weeks ago. Nafie accused the United States of having a hidden agenda -- regime change -- and using Darfur and CPA as "tools" to accomplish this goal. He said the United States consistently displayed uneven treatment, confronting the Government of Sudan but ignoring transgressions by the Government of South Sudan, Darfur rebels, or others. Carter resolutely denied these accusations, characterizing them as ludicrous. End Summary

12. (C) Carter opened the meeting by saying the USG would like to get a sense from President Bashir's advisers on the direction of things in Sudan. He noted that the United States and Sudan share the same goals: a prosperous Sudan at peace with itself and with its neighbors. Sudan is at a crossroads: the first path leads from one virtue to the next, with the possibility of finding resolutions to Darfur and implementing the CPA, while the other, as represented by the status quo, only leads to an ever steeper downhill. Darfur is a very potent question which has captured the attention of President Obama, Vice President Biden, and Secretary of State Clinton. Carter urged the Sudanese to seize the moment and use the existing structure for a successful outcome. He further emphasized that the moment is right, as there is a capable UN/AU Joint Mediator for Darfur, Djibril Bassole, in whom the United States has confidence and supports, and who is working in coordination with the Qataris on the Doha Initiative. Carter underscored that the United States is very concerned about the situation in Muhajariya, in South Darfur, which threatens to cause massive casualties, a humanitarian crisis, and an abrupt halt to the peace process.

13. (C) Carter asked his Sudanese interlocutors to pause in military operations against Justice and Equality Movement (JEM) forces which forcibly seized the Muhajariya two weeks ago from the Government and Sudan Liberation Movement (SLM)/Minni Minawi, who signed the Darfur Peace Agreement (DPA), to avoid additional violence which will help no one, and agree to advance the date for a Doha meeting with JEM by one week. Carter attempted to underscore to the Government of Sudan (GOS) that there are consequences to its behavior, including action by the UN Security Council. He further pressed upon the GOS that at this moment, the USG is undertaking a major review of policy and strategy towards Sudan, including more robust options in Darfur,

and any action -- positive or negative -- taken by GOS would likely influence such a policy. He relayed that the USG is deeply concerned not only about the lack of movement on Darfur peace negotiations, but also about the lagging pace of implementation of the CPA between North and South Sudan, the slow pace of preparation for 2009 elections, the continued dispute over border demarcation, and the status of Abyei, not to mention issues related to the level of support and cooperation on the bilateral front.

14. (C) Nafie said the main issue for Sudan is bilateral relations with the United States. The USG does not think nearly so much about humanitarian affairs and human rights in the Middle East or other parts of Africa as it does when it comes to Sudan. Darfur, the CPA, and humanitarian affairs are really tools the United States is using to undermine the GOS because it is not satisfied with the bilateral relationship. Addressing Carter, Nafie said "unless you tell us what your problem really is, we will get nowhere." Carter replied that issues like Darfur and CPA implementation have a close correlation with U.S./Sudan bilateral relations. The USG has labeled what is going on in Darfur as genocide. The USG has been engaged for nearly two decades trying to resolve the conflict between the North and the South. The United States and Sudan need to get these issues off the table so that they can concentrate on the more constructive elements of the relationship and on sustainable economic growth and development.

15. (C) Shortley, seeking to clarify Nafie's point, asked if it was the Sudanese government's perception that the United States is seeking regime change. Nafie said with emphasis "exactly: the United States is always squeezing us, and we have

ADDIS ABAB 00000267 002 OF 003

no mutual interest." Sudan appreciates the USG's efforts on negotiating the CPA, but does not appreciate the systematically uneven approach which favors the Sudan People's Liberation Movement (SPLM) to the detriment of the North. Sudan feels that promises have not been kept. The government had been adamant about using a scientific approach to allocate oil revenues between North and South, but the United States insisted on a 50- 50 split, and when the North went along, it got no recognition. Sudan accepted the US's plan for partitioning the oil-rich region of Abyei, but when the SPLA violated the terms of the agreement, the United States said nothing.

16. (C) Nafie said the government thinks the CPA is a big achievement, and believes implementation is going well. He accused the SPLA of spreading all over Sudan, which he characterized as a violation of the agreement which went unremarked by the United States. The only two outstanding problems with CPA implementation are border demarcation and the census/referendum law. When Carter asked if a date had been set for the 2009 elections, Nafie replied that both sides are committed, but it is the electoral commission which decides the date. Regarding demarcation, the eastern sector is completed, there is one remaining point of disagreement in the central sector, and one remaining point in the western sector. As of now, there is nothing to jeopardize implementation of the CPA: if problems arise, it will be something superimposed on us. When Shortley asked for clarification, Nafie confirmed that he was speaking about the International Criminal Court (ICC) arrest warrant for President Bashir.

17. (C) On North/South issues, Nafie said the National Congress Party is "committed to whatever our brothers in the South decide." As for Darfur, he described it is a creation of the West. According to Nafie, Darfur is a typical conflict like what exists throughout Africa, complicated by Sudan's own internal situation. "It is our problem to resolve. We are very keen to resolve it. We don't think you fully appreciate our efforts." Nafie went on to say the Government of Sudan appreciates USG efforts on the CPA. The CPA was very fair. A two-week signing deadline was issued at the time of its completion. Those who refused to sign would be labeled

terrorists. Nevertheless, the United States turned a blind eye when most of the rebel groups refused to sign. "If there is anyone who can claim we have not been helpful, let them come forward with documentation and prove it. We fully support the Bassole/Doha process and come to the table without preconditions so long as others do the same." Turning to Muhajariya, Nafie said he had heard Carter suggest that Sudan not take back territory lost to JEM. He added that Muhajariya is deep inside Sudan, close to South Kordofan, on the road to Abyei, and far from the border with Chad, whence the rebels came. "We will not hear talk of you telling us not to fight JEM."

18. (C) Deng, who is a southerner, spoke little in the meeting, but when prompted by Nafie, said he does not see eye to eye with Nafie on the CPA implementation issue. He said Nafie's statements were not helpful to improve bilateral relations.

19. (C) Carter said it is difficult to disprove the negative, summarizing that Sudanese authorities clearly have a deep distrust of the United States and its motives. Carter dispelled Nafie's claims as ludicrous. Darfur is not a simple African conflict and it has horrified a broad spectrum of the American public. Responding to Nafie's claims of American plotting, "All of our work over the past two decades is proof we are not trying to overthrow you." As for the immediate crisis facing Muhajariya, Carter told his Sudanese interlocutor that the US was also pressuring them to cease military actions and proceed to Doha immediately. Shortley said in a first meeting with the new Secretary, Sudan was discussed, and the Secretary asked for a strategy. The United States can either have a deeper engagement with Sudan or more mistrust and a degradation of relations noting that -- it is easy for the Department of State to recommend deeper engagement which builds on the high points of the CPA and DPA signings. However, Shortley stressed that the Government of Sudan must build confidence with the new U.S. Administration and its actions over the coming days will have a significant impact. On CPA implementation, much work remains. On Darfur, only a minimum level of implementation has been accomplished.

110. (C) Nafie said "we have not claimed we are not interested in a deeper dialogue. We need to be able to agree on a measure

ADDIS ABAB 00000267 003 OF 003

for success or failure. We have the Assessment and Evaluation Committee which could serve as a model of how an unbiased, independent arbiter can judge results, separating rhetoric from reality."

111. (C) Mustafa spoke about when he accompanied Deng to the United States to meet with Secretary Rice. Deng wrote on a piece of paper the three things Sudan wanted most from the United States -- lifting the State Sponsor of Terrorism designation, lifting sanctions, and managing a basket of bilateral issues, while Mustafa himself wrote down the three things he thought the United States most wanted from Sudan -- peace in Darfur, the CPA, and bilateral issues. He said Rice had expressed understanding and agreed strongly with both lists. He would like to see the roadmap of the new Administration, and asked if today's meeting was the beginning of a new roadmap or just a transition point. According to Mustafa, public opinion in Sudan will not accept JEM leader Khalil Ibrahim taking over the town of Muhajariya. "What is your strategy? You are asking us not to fight. Are you also telling Khalil to quit Muhajariya? He has been occupying the town for two weeks. He hand picked this town as his new military base of operations for its location deep inside Sudanese territory and for its relative proximity to Abyei. Should we be required to accept this?"

112. (C) Carter said the United States wants what the GOS: A Darfur at peace, with UNAMID troops returned to their native countries, and displaced Darfurians back in their homes to resume their livelihoods. The USG has issued a statement

condemning the JEM provocations and Sudanese bombing. Carter stated that "Doha can move your interests forward. Military action will only hurt your image, and your cause." Mustafa said the best thing for Muhajariya would be for JEM to leave, for UNAMID to stay, and for Minni Minawi to return. Mustafa opined that if the United States does not tell JEM to leave Muhajariya, some people will logically draw the conclusion that the United States told them to do it during their recent visit to the United States. Nafie added it is not the Government of Sudan who created this situation. JEM's actions are a provocation and if we do nothing, the situation will get much worse, he said. A convoy of reinforcements with approximately 100 vehicles had been found on its way to the town and, while the army had stopped it, the convoy was bound to make another run at the town. Nafie stated again that the GOS cannot allow Muhajariya to remain in JEM's hands.

¶13. (C) Carter vigorously rejected Khalil's insinuation that the USG knew of let alone approved JEM's decision to occupy Muhajariya and urged the Sudanese again to hold off. Nafie said "we will try a quick, clean job on Muhajariya and then we will go to Doha." Carter again urged Sudan to step back from confrontation and seek first a peaceful resolution in Doha, but Nafie again demurred. Carter then said it was the Government of Sudan's responsibility to contain the violence and prevent the conflict from spilling over into the Chad/Sudan relationship. Nafie claimed that the Government of Sudan had no interest in seeking the overthrow of Chadian President Deby.

¶14. (C) Shortley said that Djibril Ibrahim, JEM spokesman and brother of JEM leader Khalil Ibrahim, will fly from London to meet with Bassole and his brother in N'Djamena and continue onward to Doha for negotiations of the draft framework and cessation of hostilities. On the ICC, Carter said we need to continue to work towards resolving problems regardless of the outcome of the ICC arrest warrant: We have no choice but to move CPA implementation and resolution of Darfur forward.

¶15. (U) Acting A/S Carter approved this message before departing Addis.
YAMAMOTO